



National Conference of Editorial Writers

*1125 N Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20036*

Telephone (202) 785-1081

Executive Registry

76-2215/2

June 2, 1976

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St. Louis, Mo. 63101

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Democrat & Chronicle
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The Honorable George Bush
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Langley, Virginia 20505

Dear Mr. Bush:

Thank you for your letter of May 18 responding to the resolution approved by the Executive Board of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. "From the wording of the resolution I gather the members of the board may not have been aware at the time of the complete text of my February 11th statement on this matter," you wrote.

Board members were well aware of your February 11th statement and considered it inadequate because (1) it failed to address itself to the problem of planting false or misleading information by the CIA in foreign media, (2) it failed to remove a double standard by which the CIA considers it proper to hire foreign journalists but not proper to hire American journalists and because (3) you refused to release the names of journalists who are or have been in the employ of the CIA.

Indeed, board members felt that your February 11th statement was rendered largely inoperative when the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities disclosed in April that you intended to stop hiring only correspondents "accredited" by American publications and other news organizations. Thus, under this curious procedure, the CIA will refrain from hiring "accredited" correspondents but would still hire, for instance, the supervisors of those correspondents because, after all, the supervisors are not "accredited."

As for Section 3 of the resolution (enclosed), the need to release the names of journalists who have been in the employ of the CIA was underlined by the Soviet Union's accusations on May 26 regarding three American correspondents in Moscow. The Soviet Union charged that the three have had connections with the CIA and although the Agency has denied it, it would

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be much more effective if you actually name those journalists who were paid by the CIA. As it is, every American journalist abroad is under suspicion, and that can only make his or her work more difficult and affects the credibility of reports sent to home newspapers. Section 3 addresses itself primarily to Americans and does not ask, for instance, disclosure of names of foreign journalists on your payroll who are working for East European or Russian media.

I would like, again, to suggest a meeting between you and a small NCEW delegation to convey to you personally a deep concern over a very serious matter affecting the media and to clarify any further misunderstandings you might have about this resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Zakarian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Zakarian" clearly distinguishable.

John J. Zakarian
President
(St. Louis Post-Dispatch
St. Louis, Mo. 63101)



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The National Conference of Editorial Writers long has been concerned about the integrity and accuracy of the information upon which editorial judgments are based.

It also is committed to the principle that its members should try always to avoid even the appearance of misleading readers in any published material on their editorial pages.

The main reason for both concerns is to protect the integrity and credibility of both journalism and the democratic process.

Therefore, the Executive Board of the National Conference of Editorial Writers:

1. Opposes the clandestine employment of American or foreign journalists by the CIA, and urges that all such relationships be terminated immediately.
2. Recognizing that information flows across international boundaries, opposes any planting of false or misleading information by the CIA in the media.
3. Calls upon the Central Intelligence Agency to release the names of journalists who are or have been in its employ, both to protect the reputations of those who were not and to give Americans knowledge they need to evaluate accurately what they have read.